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*Leadership Competency Series*

# Developing Emotional Intelligence – Part I

**LEADERSHIP COMPETENCY/ The mystique of 'intelligence Quotient' is no more the single factor to decide people excellence. Emotional Intelligence (EI), a combination of empathy and self-knowledge competencies are at premium in the job market today to evaluate star performers and predict future performance says M R Chandramowly.**

WHY smart people fail? Why Leaders fail? Because of their inability to manage relationships and change. A study reveals some specific reasons for leadership failure: Insensitive to others, aloof, betrays trust, controlling/micromanages, not strategic, can't adapt to new management, poor hiring practices, and doesn't handle performance problems.

## Technical expertise does not mean the ability to lead

A young engineer who had earned great numbers in his school and college came to work for an engineering company but was fired within a short period of time. The reason? 'He was brilliant in his work' said his manager, 'but he could not take directions'. When his supervisor point out how the design did not conform to the specifications, he'd get defensive. He could not take feed back. When other engineers ask him for some help, he would turn them down, saying he was busy with his own part of the project. He created so much of animosity that when he needed some help, no one wanted to support him.

When people with high IQ and technical expertise reach higher positions their strengths may become liabilities. The classic mistake is assuming that if someone has a special expertise, it necessarily means they also have the ability to lead. "I call it as Michael Jordan effect," says Paul Robinson, director of Sandia National Laboratories. "Michael Jordan is a brilliant player, of course, but the game comes naturally to him that he may not be very good at coaching other players – he probably never even thinks about how he does what he does. So, how well are the Chicago Bulls going to do as a team when Michael Jordan is on the bench, not on the court?"

## New measure for people excellence

Then, Who is the right candidate? Who will be recruited? Who will be let go? Who is retained, developed and promoted? The judgment yardstick is changing. The IQ mystique is fading. The new rule is emerging. The new rule predicts who is most likely to become a star performer and who is not prone to derailing.

The new rule measures the traits that are crucial to current and future jobs. The new measure takes for granted having enough intellectual ability and technical know-how to do your job and it focuses not on IQ but on personal qualities, such as initiative and empathy, ability and persuasiveness.

Daniel Goleman brought out the impact of Emotional Intelligence (EI) revolutionalising the way we think about personal excellence. The concept of Emotional Intelligence is developed based on a set of competencies like self-awareness, self-confidence and self control; commitment and integrity; the ability to communicate and influence, to initiate and accept change – these competencies are at a premium in today's job market. They are linked to two powerful faculties of inner personality, the intellect and emotions.

## Emotions – views of east and west

Emotions are the natural impulses of 'mind' and are most powerful result drivers if channelised and managed well.

The western approach to emotions spread in psychological analysis of aspects like mind, dream, brain and behaviour based on research, data and case studies.

In this approach emotion is defined as something in one's mind, sometimes consciously and sometimes subconsciously, balancing, integrating and juggling various different, and often conflicting, facts, experiences and concepts. The eastern wisdom goes beyond the body – mind natural science phenomena and gets deeper to understand the subtler aspects above the mind (is it the high emotional aspect of Asians?).

It presents a logical and simple structure of understanding of our internal personality. Our ancient psychologists have arranged the human system in a grosser-subtler sequence of Body-Senses-Mind-Intellect and Ego.

Emotions are the vital forces for the values and principles each one of us live for and they drive our focus, actions and its speed. The western data says that Asians are more emotional than the rest.

There is nothing wrong with being emotional if the impulses are positive and aimed for the greater benefit for society at large.

One can draw a contrast of negative and positive emotions of Hitler and Gandhi in their leadership of influencing people. We cannot imagine a political situation, polling, government formation, gaining or losing power or our independence struggle without the element of 'emotions'. Emotion is the fuel of life. In the eastern approach emotions are related to the senses and mind. Intellect which is the discriminating faculty is on a higher plane than the mind. Then, how do we explain the combination of emotion and intellect – the emotional intelligence? This was a question posed to me in one of the competency workshops. Unless we understand the two different approaches of east and west on the study of emotions it will be difficult to connect with the competencies of EI.

In the eastern wisdom (katha:3-3) there is this familiar simile of self riding in the chariot- the body and the intellect as the charioteer with the mind as the reins. Mind holds the reins which may either control or be dragged by the team of the five senses driven by the intellect. Plato looks upon intelligence as the ruling power for the integration of the different elements in human nature (Republic IV.433). He also states that a man sets in, orders his own life and is his own master when he binds together the three intrinsic principles ; Reason, Emotion and the sensual appetites.

The capability of discrimination using the intellect in balancing emotions and sensual appetite looks very similar to the techniques of developing emotional intelligence. Goleman has authenticated with data and case studies that EI can be learnt and developed.

## Leadership and Emotional Intelligence

What is emotional intelligence? It is the ability to perceive accurately, appraise and express emotions. It is the capability to access and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought. It is about understanding emotion and emotional knowledge and learning to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth. Research has shown, there doesn't exist a strong correlation between the intelligence Quotient (IQ) and success in life, although popular opinion largely correlates success with this measurement. There is data which shows that number of times those who became president/CEO displayed certain emotional competencies compared with those passed over. The EQ competencies, which were displayed by successful leaders, are: Self Control (7X), Empathy (3X), Teamwork (2.5X), Self Confidence (2X) and Achievement Orientation (2x). (The figures in brackets are the degree of frequency shown.) A high EQ Leader understands and masters recognising the emotions of others in a way that instils confidence, motivates and inspires the group members. He is able to enhance group effectiveness by balancing the components of perception and emotional maturity. He is able to read the emotions and thoughts of others through the use of insight, empathy, and observational skills. He exhibits consideration of feelings of others when or before taking action. Treats each person differently according to his or her unique makeup. Takes into account the impact of emotions and feelings on a situation. Understands the psychological and emotional needs of people.

Considers the impact of his/her own behaviour or decisions on other people. People with high EQ know which emotions they are feeling and why, realise the links between their feelings and what they think, do, and say, recognise how their feelings affect their performance and have a guiding awareness of their values and goals.

An emotionally matured leader tends to be in touch with his feelings. He knows that high EQ is about managing emotions and not overcome by them. In this realistically optimistic approach leaders won't let setbacks and disappointments derail them. Later we will review the Goleman's EI competencies, the potential to cultivate these competencies changing the way of corporate training.

(To be continued)